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1. Purpose

Family engagement is one of the essential elements to increase academic and social success throughout the educational career of each student. Family partnerships in education must remain dynamic to provide emotional, informational, and academic support to traditional and non-traditional families as they confront the challenging task of raising a well-rounded citizen in society.

Empowering parents and families to advocate for their children to ensure quality education and equal access to learning involves commitment and communication. Emphasis should be placed on open and ongoing, two-way, meaningful communication between home and school, partnerships with families throughout the school system, community outreach, and resources for parenting skills, student learning, and volunteering in schools.

2. Scope


Family Engagement is an evolving, dynamic movement composed of programs, principles, and approaches. To support this position, the following administrative regulations have been developed to provide systemic consistency throughout the entire Carroll County Public School System.

3. Responsibilities


The Superintendent/Designee has the responsibility for enforcing these regulations by communicating them to all relevant parties and by providing necessary instructions (if appropriate) to all staff members.

4. Procedures


A. Communication– ensuring a welcoming environment that allows for open communication between the home, school, and community that fosters a strong and effective partnership

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1. Use a variety of communication tools in a clear, concise format to facilitate ongoing, two-way, meaningful interaction (i.e., assignment books, notes and letters, phone calls, and electronic communication, such as email and social media)
 2. Provide opportunities for parents to communicate directly with principals and other administrative staff (i.e., home visits, follow-up conferences, evening meetings, electronic communication, etc.)
 3. Offer information regarding effective communication techniques and the importance of ongoing, two-way, meaningful communication between the school and the family
 4. Supply clear information regarding student course expectations and offerings, academic grades, school activities, student services, and optional school programs
 5. Disseminate information on school reforms, policies, discipline procedures, assessment tools, and school goals
 6. Provide opportunities for parents to review student work and provide sound and effective habits to monitor their child's academic progress
 7. Ensure both parties are aware of and are sensitive to issues such as cultural diversity, language differences, and special needs
- B. Parenting – techniques are fostered and supported seamlessly between the home and school
1. Use varied methods, media, and languages to provide parents with information about their rights and responsibilities with regard to grading and discipline policies
 2. Create parent resource centers and other forms of support for parents so that they can fully participate in the education of their children

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3. Provide parents with information concerning programs and resources within the CCPS school system, as well as within the community, which provide support services to families
 4. Reach out and recruit all families to participate in their child's academic career
 5. Encourage system/school-generated committees and task forces to offer an opportunity for parent representatives to participate
 6. Provide outreach to families
- C. Student success – families and the community continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development
1. Provide information to staff members on successful approaches for engaging families in their child's education
 2. Encourage parents to set educational goals for their children and plan for academic transitions and post-secondary education and careers
 3. Sponsor workshops and/or distribute information to assist families in understanding how students can improve skills, get help when needed, meet class expectations, and perform well on assessments
- D. Volunteering - families and community members are active participants in the life of the school and feel welcomed, valued and connected to each other, to school staff, and to learning. Their support and assistance are encouraged and recognized.
1. Ensure that school and offices create a climate in which volunteers feel valued and welcome
 2. Survey volunteers regarding their interests, talents, and availability, and coordinate the volunteer resources with those that exist within the school and among the faculty
 3. Provide recognition for all volunteers within the school and school system
 4. Create an inviting climate and effectively utilize volunteer resources

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5. Offer volunteer opportunities for those who are unable to volunteer in the school building or during regular school hours
 6. Communicate the need for volunteers throughout the school year
- E. Decision Making–families and school staff are welcomed and considered partners in decisions that affect children and families. Together they inform, influence, and create policies, practices and programs.
1. Invite families to be active members of the school system’s decision-making process and the methods for providing input to the local schools, to the Superintendent's office, and to the Board of Education regarding decision-making, raising issues or concerns, appealing decisions, and resolving problems
 2. Provide guidance to schools in order to strengthen their PTA/PTO to help encourage a process for decision-making
 3. Ensure open communication and transparency through the decision-making process
 4. Allow families to become active members of the decision making process
- F. Advocacy-families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure students are treated fairly, and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success
1. Provide guidance to schools in order to strengthen their PTA/PTO to help develop family advocacy
 2. Ensure open communication and transparency through the advocacY process
 3. Provide multiple pathways to allow parents to advocate for children
- G. Family and Community Collaboration – families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students,


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families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civil participation

1. Develop partnerships with local businesses and service groups to advance student learning and assist schools and families
2. Foster student participation in community service
3. Inform staff members of the partnerships available in the community
4. Involve community members in school volunteer programs
5. Include parent representatives on advisory committees and on school improvement teams
6. Seek parent representation on system and school committees as needed
7. Promote parent participation on school, district, state and national committees
8. Provide professional learning to school and central office staff to ensure that a family-friendly atmosphere and an inclusive environment exist in the school system
9. Collaborate with community agencies to provide schools with such services as wellness, healthcare, social services, and childcare
10. Provide workshops for parents and community members on leadership and effective involvement with schools
11. Connect parents and families with the community learning opportunities, community services/agencies, and civic participation

5. References


- a. Maryland's PreK-12 Family Engagement Framework: A Shared Responsibility
- b. National PTA Standards
- c. USDE Policy Statement on Family Engagement from the Early Years to the Early Grades

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- d. Constantino, Steven M., Engage Every Family: Five Simple Principles
- e. Constantion, Steven M., 101 Ways to Create Real Family Engagement
- f. Epstein, Joyce L., School, Family, and Community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools
- g. Epstein, Joyce L. and associates, School, Family and community partnerships: Your handbook for action

6. Definitions

- A. "Family" means a child's primary care-giving unit
- B. "Parent" means any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student
 - 1. "Biological parent" means a natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated
 - 2. "Adoptive parent" means a person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated
 - 3. "Custodian" means a person or agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities
 - 4. "Guardian" means a person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and responsibilities
 - 5. "Caregiver" means an adult resident of Carroll County who exercises care, custody, or control over the student, but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian
 - 6. "Foster Parent" means an adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a state agency or a licensed child placement agency
- C. "Community" means the society-at-large, which is involved in supporting the child including, but not limited to, families, business, faith communities, government agencies, non-profit service organizations, other organizations and individuals

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- D. "Advocate" means a person who pleads another's cause; a person who speaks or writes in support of something
- E. "Governance" means a collaborative group approach to establishing team goals and making shared policy, procedure, and program decisions
- F. "Parent Engagement" means any action or behavior which directly or indirectly enhances or encourages a child's behavior (i.e. serving on committees, attending school functions, communicating with teachers, etc.)
- G. "Partnership" means an association of CCPS with two or more parties taking part in activities in common with one another or others or two or more parties engaged with CCPS in working toward the same goals